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FRIDAY..... DECEMBER 31

Investigations.

There will be no argument required to give assurance to the public mind that the work of investigation will be, to the Democratic majority in the House, thoroughly a labor of love. If Shakespeare was right when he said, that "the labor we delight in, physics pain," then may we presume that the labor of making investigations, however arduous, will be accepted as a matter of delight purified of all pain, by those whose anxiety is almost a fever to come to a saving knowledge of the true inwardness of things. We rejoice that it is so. There is nothing that this country so essentially needs as a thorough sifting and shaking up in every department of the Government. And for that reason we deem it a God-send to the country that a Democratic majority now rules in the House.

Investigations will be instituted into the condition and management of everything involving official trusts, whether of high or low degree. The public archives will be compelled to yield up their documents and records, and the call for "persons and papers" will become a standing order of the House. The executive and administrative departments will be interrogated by committees, both standing and special, demanding of the officials—"What have you done?—and why have you done it?"

But all this must be met without resentment, and must be replied to without reluctance. It is the stern mandate of the sovereign people to their servants requiring them to render an account of their stewardship. Certainly investigations were not omitted by any former Congress under Republican rule. But they were friends investigating friends. Under the natural influence of party affiliation there necessarily arises that fellow feeling that makes men wondrous kind, and that dulls the eye of scrutiny, and softens, if it does not silence, the voice of censure. But now the investigations are to be conducted by political opponents, whose policy will be to scrutinize without relenting and to denounce without restraint. And this is as it should be. It is one party compelling the other party to be honest.

We presume that no one, even among Republicans, is so very verdant as to conclude that the Administration is so pure, so perfectly without spot or blemish, as to make investigation an impertinence. Happy day would that be for this country when investigation would reveal such purity in the administration of the government. But, unfortunately, that day has not yet dawned. On the contrary, every intelligent looker-on in our "Yankee" must

"Have seen corruption holl and bubble,
Tilt is over run the state: laws for all faults;
But faults so countenanced, that the strong
Statutes
Strut like the forfeits in a barber's shop,
As much in muck as mark."

Upon all this, investigation should let in the light, no matter what official may be blasted by its beams. The Nation is greater than any man, and it is for the nation's good that all public sores should be probed, and all corruption exposed.

We do not mean to assert that the present Administration is corrupt beyond what others may have been in the past, or may again be in the future. But he is indeed a poor student of political philosophy who does not know that any administration of any party, composed of beings less than archangels, which has been in power through so many years of uninterrupted majorities as has the Republican party, can not fail to become corrupt. The tendency to corruption is inevitable and invincible in any political party commanding long leases of power; because all foul birds and vile beasts and creeping vermin throng to its strong branches to fatten and to plunder. It is against these that the full focus of investigation should be directed.

Nor do we believe that Republicans in Congress or elsewhere, will feel any reluctance in promoting any investigation the Democratic majority in the House may direct. It would be to their shame if they should. It would be a confession of judgment. It would amount to a plea of guilty. That much of the matter charged upon the Administration as corrupt, has proceeded from individual hatred and ill-will, as well as from undue partisan prejudice, can not be denied. But that enough remains to offer an ample field for enterprise in the work of investigation is equally certain. And that man is neither a good citizen nor a good Republican who would hesitate one moment in giving all possible aid and comfort to any investigating committee charged with the duty of revealing the truth, whether that truth should work honor or dishonor to any living man. An administration of any party that can not stand investigation, ought not to stand at all.

But our Democratic friends in Congress must remember that the process of investigation is not altogether a one-sided affair. It is an instrument that

carries two edges, and is capable of cutting both ways. It has the qualities of the Australian boomerang, that sometimes rebounds to crush the hand that hurled it. We trust therefore that when investigation is instituted it will be thorough, even though it involve friends as well as foes in its rebound. Investigation by Congressional committees is, at best, but a bungling process for arriving at truth. It is surrounded by so much pomp and circumstance, retarded by so many preliminaries, conducted with so much circumlocution, confined to no direct issue, circumscribed by no rules, that the results are seldom more than platitudes, and the reports founded thereon are usually inconsequential and obscure.

And yet, by all means let investigations be made. The people expect it; public sentiment demands it. The motive in making them may be quite as much partisan as patriotic; but no matter for that. The result to the country is the same. And although corruption discovered in one party may afford but small political capital to the other, it nevertheless enlightens the public mind as to public men, and enables the people to reject the culpable and select the more worthy of either party; and again the result is a gain to the country and the public service. So, we say to the majority in the House, go on and investigate. Investigate. Leave no small rottenness uncovered in any department or bureau of the public service. Let there be no taint of corruption unrevealed among those in high places. See to it that these modern confederations for crime, known as "rings," are broken to atoms, even though those of your own political faith be involved in the catagolism. Thus conducted, investigations will be of value to yourselves and to the country; otherwise they will prove, both to yourselves and to the country, a delusion and a snare.

We learn that there are strong indications of another eruption of Mt. Vesuvius. Prof. Palmieri, who is an expert in the ways of the quiescent volcano, says that the venerable volcano is certainly inclined to go on a "bust" before long. It has had no real frolic since 1872, and will probably join Mayor Johnston's centennial jimbarnance in honor of 1876. It was in 1850 that the great eruption occurred, wherein the natural channels of exit for the lava through the craters were closed, and the fiery mountain opened far below two new craters on the mountain side. And it is from these modern craters that premonitions of a coming eruption are now manifested.

The volcanic activity of Vesuvius seems to increase with its years. From the first to the seventeenth century inclusive there were only nineteen recorded eruptions, an average of only a little more than one in each hundred years. During the eighteenth century there were twenty-three eruptions. We are now up to three-quarters of the nineteenth century, and Vesuvius has already honored the world with twenty-five eruptions, one about every three years. At this rate of increase the old fire-bell will soon be in a state of perpetual uproar and convulsion.

The Sultan can't raise money to pay the interest on his loans, but he can spend money bravely. His personal expenses amount to \$10,000,000 yearly. His palaces require the services of 5,000 persons. Some of these are married and have families, so that not less than 7,000 persons are daily fed in the palace. The kitchens alone employ 500 persons. There are 400 musicians and 300 door-keepers. The harem has 1,200 inmates. He keeps 600 horses, some of the finest in the world. He is very fond of his great menagerie of birds and animals. He is constantly attended by 25 aide-de-camp. His fondness for pictures cost him the past year no less than \$300,000 in new purchases. This reckless extravagance fully indicates the financial embarrassments that must eventually swamp his Empire.

LOWER CALIFORNIA has been generally regarded as a waste land, a blotch on the beauties of our Pacific coast. But recent investigations by the medical officers connected with the navy give Lower California a handsome setting up among the wealth-bearing regions of that coast. The mines are stated as being particularly rich in silver. Copper is found in abundance, and is being largely worked. Besides deposits of silver and copper, gold, iron, antimony, alabaster, &c., are found. The mining operations are conducted in a very rude and slatternly manner, and yet yield rich returns to the population, which is generally a lazy and "shiftless" set. Some day there will be somebody besides "Greasers" in that peninsula.

The Spirit of the Age.

A little brown-eyed maiden of five summers, in the city of _____, has a most devoted admirer in a young man of four years. They are constantly together, exchanging visits daily and semi-daily. She came bounding in to see him one cold day last week, her cheeks glowing and eyes sparkling with some new information. The little heart seemed to swell with a keen sense of her feminine superiority, as she exclaimed: "Oh, Harry, don't you wish you were a girl? For boys are made of puppy dog's tails and rags and nails, but girls are made of sugar and spice and every thing nice." Now, sir, don't you wish you wish you were a girl?" she repeated in a tantalizing manner. Master Harry seemed for a moment staggered and overwhelmed with shame at his inferiority, but he soon collected himself as his masculine sarcasm came to the rescue. "Oh, prob, that is not a bit true, Maria Sprague, I don't believe a word of it; its only—only—Thundry-school readin'!"

Miss Maria seemed shocked at the young man's want of faith in Sunday-school books, and said no more.

NUMBER SEVEN.

My Aunt Lucretia White resided in the thriving and bustling little town of Banford. In her early days it was said that she had many suitors for her hand and heart, but having a strange propensity for procrastination, she failed to make up her mind upon the subject of marriage until it was too late; so one afternoon she gave her admirers tell after tell, and left her alone to ponder on "What might have been," if she had only given a timely and serious consideration to their proposals.

No one who regarded Aunt Lucretia's placid countenance would ever suppose that the fact of her becoming an old maid and in the least degree rendered her days less happy, or had given her one moment of regret. She moved on in her accustomed way, and never seemed to cast a look back to the pleasant times when she was the reigning beauty of the town, with \$40,000 invested in good mortgages upon the properties of her neighbors.

Of all the slow women I have ever seen Aunt Lucretia was the slowest. She was never in time for anything except her bed and rocking chair. But her sweet and easy temperation for all the other defects of her nature. It was impossible to excite her anger. No matter what occurred, Aunt Lucretia was always ready to turn it to the best account. From my boyhood to my manhood, I visited her regularly ever summer, and during all these years I never received a harsh or unkind reproach, though many a time, no doubt, I merited a sound thrashing.

The good old lady weighed two hundred pounds, and a fraction, but she moved on her feet with the nimbleness of a girl, and nothing pleased her better than, when at seventy-three, to hear her younger friends assert that she was as agile as the best of them.

Of course, Aunt Lucretia had some peculiarities; it would have been strange had it been otherwise. For a woman like her who had read strange books in her youth and led a solitary life, could scarcely fail to have peculiarities in her old age. As a dreamer of dreams and beholder of visions, Aunt Lucretia had no equal, at least in Banford. It followed, of course, that she was a little superstitious, and inclined to come to her to interpret her dreams, and to explain mysterious noises which were regarded as omens, and Aunt Lucretia being exceedingly religious, was always able to open her Bible and point out passages where such things were predicted in the "latter days."

It is strange how little it requires in some cases to get a reputation for knowledge. Aunt Lucretia was an example of this kind. Among the numerous friends who visited my aunt's house was Mrs. Ruth Smith, a widow of about thirty years, whose husband had left her only fifteen thousand dollars, when she had been trying to double ever since the poor man had "suffered his mortal coil." But Mrs. Smith had never been able to accomplish her laudable purpose, notwithstanding the sundry lottery tickets she had purchased, and the various other devices she had tried. One day she came hurrying into my aunt's presence in the greatest excitement.

"My dear Miss White," she exclaimed, "what do you suppose this means? I went to call on a friend this morning who had recently arrived in town, and found the number of her house was seven. After leaving and while passing down the street, I was accosted by a poor beggar woman who solicited alms, saying she had just given birth. Well, I got into the street car, and happened to notice that it also numbered seven. I began to think these coincidences strange, when a handsome child attracted my attention, and on asking the woman who had it in charge its age, she replied 'Seven.' Now, my dear Miss White, I am convinced no longer, so I determined to seek you at once, and to don't believe this thing was the result of accident. What does this seven mean?"

Aunt Lucretia placed her spectacles upon her nose, and with much gravity replied: "Seven is a sacred number."

"I know it," interrupted Mrs. Smith, who, by the-by, had a very limited knowledge of Scripture. "I know it; there's the seven commandments."

"Ten Commandments," said my aunt, by way of correction.

"Oh!" replied the widow, "are there so many? Well, it's all the same. Continue, my good Miss Lucretia, and tell me, if you please, what's the frequent recurrence of the number seven mean?"

Aunt Lucretia put on the mysterious, as she replied: "I can not imagine what it means, perhaps nothing at all."

"Oh! but it does," persisted the widow, "I know it does."

"Then why do you come to me?" she blantly inquired.

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the stakes in his overalls pocket, he said: "I'd give \$50 out of that if I saw Jim Shaw had been here to see that team pull. Jerry, I'm dry; let's go over to Buck Williams's and take a drink." When he returned to his mustangs to start out of town, he threw up his hat and said: "Whoop! I've teamed in Walla Walla, Nevada, and Arkansas, and with my slab-sided plugs kin out-pull any six mules in Sonoma county." As he mounted his wheeler he sung out to the crowd: "I snaked that old thimble-down out of the mud and have got the coin to show it. Hooyay! Arkansas! Whar's them mules? Git erp, Pete," cracked his whip, turned the corner and passed out of sight.

In a Lion's Den.

[From the Meridian (Miss. Mercury).]
Poor old Lee Bell, who lost his life here on Saturday at the hands of Beason brothers, had been in numerous tight places during his eventful and chequered life. The younger Robinson, who was managing the show which was here on Saturday, related the particulars of a frightful scrape old Lee got into once during the term of several years he traveled with his father's show. It was in Texas; Lee had got into trouble with a body of Texas ruffians who had come to the show; at we think, Austin. Furious with anger and whiskey, they set upon him with revolver and bowie-knife. The case was hopeless, but in a right and successfully eluding pursuit. Lucily he escaped the first onset and threw them off the track for a moment. He could hear howls and venomous threats. Time was precious, and a desperate deed for safety had to be done quickly. He approached the keeper of the lion's cage, and upon peril of his life, bade him deliver him instantly the key. Bell unlocked the door and entered, seeking the safety inside the lion's den he well knew was not outside. The ruse successfully threw them off the scent. He rode in the lion's cage seventeen miles, and the noble brute—nobler than the human brutes who pursued—treated him with kind indifference. It is doubtless the only instance on record wherein mortal sought and obtained safety from his infuriate fellows by taking refuge in a lion's den.

Mr. Stillman Greene, of Lake Koshkonong, has two daughters, strong, buxom lasses, who are not afraid of work, and can do as much of it as any two girls in the country. In their neighborhood lives an old bachelor who evidently has not much faith in woman's pluck. He made a bet of six dollars with the two girls that the two could not chop a cord of wood in six days. The girls were not to be outdone by a bachelor, and they accepted the bet. They went to work, chopped the cord, and in seven hours chopped one cord of white oak wood, a specimen of which we saw at Echlin & Foote's this morning. The girls got the money from Mr. Bachelor, who probably by this time thinks that there are some women who can work, and who have pluck and energy.

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